

# Blanche Lincoln

## U.S. Senator for Arkansas

*Fighting for Arkansas's Servicemembers,  
Veterans and Their Families*



Summer 2010

Dear Fellow Arkansan,

Since I was first elected to the U.S. Senate, I have fought to ensure that Arkansas's veterans and their families receive the support and resources they need. My father and both grandfathers served our nation in uniform and taught me from an early age about the sacrifices our troops and their families make to keep our nation free.

While it is important to honor these brave men and women with words, we also must honor them with our actions. That is why I have consistently supported initiatives that expand the benefits our veterans have earned and deserve. During these tough economic times, it is even more important that we don't shortchange Arkansas's veterans.

This Congress, I have authored several bills on behalf of Arkansas's military servicemembers, veterans and their families. I have focused on expanding access to quality health care for our veterans and lowering the out-of-pocket costs imposed on our servicemembers and their families through misplaced increases in enrollment fees and copayments. In addition, I have fought for more accessible health care for Guardsmen and Reservists, so they can maintain their health while also meeting the medical readiness required to fulfill their missions.

Arkansas's veterans also deserve educational benefits that keep pace with the national average cost of tuition. Just last year, my Total Force GI Bill was enacted along with the Post-9/11 GI Bill, giving Arkansas's military reservists greater access to the educational benefits they have earned while serving overseas.

Another of my priorities has been to address the backlog of pending disability claims at the Veterans Administration. My office has experienced this backlog firsthand through working with several of our veterans. That's why I have recently authored provisions passed by the Senate that would provide funding to hire additional disability claims processors for the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans Appeals.

All of our veterans—from the Greatest Generation to Vietnam War veterans to the new generation of servicemembers in the Middle East and across the globe—have sacrificed greatly on behalf of our country. Although the challenges and needs of veterans have changed over time, one thing remains constant: it is the responsibility of our nation to provide the tools necessary to care for our country's returning servicemembers and honor the commitment our nation made when we sent them into harm's way. Our grateful nation will not forget them when their military service is complete. It is the least we can do for those whom we owe so much.

With Arkansas Pride,

Blanche Lincoln  
U.S. Senator



### WHAT'S INSIDE

- NEW LINCOLN LEGISLATION TO BENEFIT VETERANS
- NEW LAW TO IMPROVE VETERANS' HEALTH CARE
- SENATOR LINCOLN IS FIGHTING FOR ARKANSAS'S VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS

[LINCOLN.SENATE.GOV](http://LINCOLN.SENATE.GOV)

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# NEW IN 2010

## New Law to Benefit Veterans and their Caregivers

*Senator Lincoln helped pass the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. The law contains a number of provisions championed by Senator Lincoln, including increased services for rural veterans, improvements to mental care for returning servicemembers, and expanded care for female veterans.*

### ★ SERVICES FOR RURAL VETERANS

The bill expands the VA's authority to provide recruitment and retention incentives so that the VA can recruit high-quality health care providers. It also ensures rural veterans are receiving high-quality care by creating financial incentives for providers to deliver high-quality services.

### ★ IMPROVEMENTS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The bill increases eligibility for servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, including National Guardsmen or Reservists, to receive readjustment counseling. It also requires funding of a grant program to train psychologists to treat veterans with combat-related disorders.

### ★ EXPANDED CARE FOR FEMALE VETERANS

The bill authorizes the VA to provide health care to a newborn child of qualifying female veterans for seven days after the birth of the child, and requires the VA to train its mental health professionals in the treatment of military and sexual trauma. It mandates that the VA implement pilot programs to provide child care to female veterans who require medical care, and to provide readjustment services to female veterans.

*For more information on the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, visit <http://lincoln.senate.gov/newsroom/2010-5-5-2.cfm>*

## New Lincoln Legislation

*Lincoln legislation would address the rising unemployment rate among the nation's veterans.*

Senator Lincoln's "Veterans Employment Act" would address the rising unemployment rate that is affecting Arkansas's 260,000 servicemembers who have returned from war.

The bill would improve training, skills, transition, education and small business assistance for service men and women to help address unemployment.

*Lincoln legislation would provide more flexible educational benefits to veterans, servicemembers*

Senator Lincoln's "Veterans Training Act," would allow beneficiaries of the new GI Bill to pursue certificate or apprenticeship programs, or programs at non-degree postsecondary institutions, including vocational, technical and career schools.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill — signed into law in 2008 with Senator Lincoln's support — excluded eligibility of GI benefits toward these types of programs, and this bipartisan legislation would restore that eligibility. In an increasingly competitive job market, veterans and servicemembers should have the flexibility to pursue the type of education they need to make a living.

## Lincoln Receives MOAA's 2010 Congressional Leadership Award



*Senator Lincoln receives the Col. Arthur T. Marix Award at the April 20 MOAA Awards Ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. She was honored with MOAA's top award for her leadership in sponsoring a wide range of legislation to secure needed improvements in National Guard, Reserve, and survivor benefits.*



## Senator Lincoln is Fighting for Arkansas's Veterans, Servicemembers, and Families

### Improving Health Care for Veterans By:

- Providing the VA with the biggest funding increase in its history, which has allowed the VA to make investments in quality health care, enhance benefits, and improve access and delivery of care.
- Prohibiting increases in TRICARE military health insurance premiums, deductibles and copayments and addressing gaps in coverage for reservists to correct any medical or dental readiness deficiencies.
- Providing additional resources for the Veterans Benefits Administration to hire more disability claims processors, invest in new technologies and increase training resources to address the claims backlog.
- Authorizing new programs aimed at improving the VA's capacity to care for female veterans' mental and physical health care needs.

- Championing efforts to allow veterans to draw full and immediate concurrent receipt of disability and retirement pay. Senator Lincoln believes these men and women should not have to worry about their pensions being cut because they receive a disability payment as a result of their service to this nation.

### Improving Access to Care for Servicemembers By:

- Expanding access to TRICARE and the VA for members of the National Guard and Reserve who have recently returned from service in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Supporting the creation of the VA's Office of Rural Health, tasked with creating demonstration projects and centers of excellence to improve health care and access for veterans in rural areas.
- Urging a mileage reimbursement rate increase for veterans traveling to the VA for care.

### Providing Quality Mental Health Care for Servicemembers and Veterans By:

- Making needed investments in mental health care initiatives to ensure the VA has the capacity to deal with the increasing complexity and number of cases of Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, increasing training for military and VA mental health care professionals, and establishing a toll-free hotline for patients and their families to report problems with medical facilities or patient care.

### Enhancing Education Benefits for Servicemembers and Veterans By:

- Implementing the biggest expansion of the GI Bill since its inception during WWII; calling for an increase in the GI Bill rate for members of the Selected Reserve; and fighting to allow beneficiaries of the Post 9/11 GI Bill to pursue certificate or apprenticeship programs, or programs at non-degree postsecondary institutions, including vocational, technical, and career schools.

### Fighting on Behalf of Military Families By:

- Fighting to provide concurrent receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Survivor Benefit Program annuity payments for spouses and children of servicemembers killed in action.
- Easing the administrative burden on military spouses and improving their ability to vote, maintain personal property, gain employment and attain an education.



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# Contact me

For assistance with veterans issues or to learn more about **my** work on behalf of Arkansas veterans, visit [www.lincoln.senate.gov](http://www.lincoln.senate.gov) or call **my** office at **501-375-2993**.

To stay informed on the latest issues and upcoming events, visit **my** online office at [www.lincoln.senate.gov](http://www.lincoln.senate.gov) and sign up for **my** e-newsletter.



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